

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1 and 9-13 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A process apparatus, comprising:

a storage unit storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference, the information including respective utterance objects of respective speakers in the discussion, each of the utterance objects including data, and a procedure for the data, and reply link information to another utterance object; and

a judgment unit calculating one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as an index of an amount of the information stored about the discussion, and said judgment unit deciding to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value.

2. (original) The process apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising

a notification unit notifying participants of the electronic conference of a holding of the face-to-face conference if said judgment unit determines to hold the face-to-face conference.

3. (original) The process apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising

a reservation unit making reservations for facilities needed to hold the face-to-face conference if said judgment unit determines to hold the face-to-face conference, said notification unit notifies expected participants of information about reserved facilities.

4. (original) The process apparatus according to claim 3, wherein

said reservation unit makes reservations for transportation needed for the expected participants to participate at the face-to-face conference; and

said notification unit notifies the expected participants of information about reserved transportation.

5. - 8. (canceled)

9. (currently amended) A process apparatus, comprising:

a storage unit storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference, the information including respective utterance objects of respective speakers in the discussion, each of the utterance objects including data, and a procedure for the data, and reply link information to another utterance object; and

a judgment unit calculating one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterance object in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as an index of a possibility of the discussion diverging, and said judgment unit deciding to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value.

10. (currently amended) A process apparatus for executing a process of an asynchronous electronic conference among a plurality of areas in a distributed environment, comprising:

a communications unit transmitting information about a discussion at the electronic conference between areas;

a storage unit storing the information about the discussion, the information including utterance objects, each containing data, and a procedure for the data, and reply link information to another utterance object; and

a judgment unit judging whether to hold a face-to-face conference by comparing an index of an amount of the stored information about the discussion with a specific value, the index representing one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of the utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion.

11. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium embodying a computer program that when executed causes a computer to perform a process comprising:

calculating one of a number of speakers in a discussion, a number of utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as indexing an amount of stored information about a discussion at an electronic conference, each of the utterance objects including data, and a procedure for the data, and reply link information to another utterance

object; and

judging to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value.

12. (currently amended) A method comprising:

recording information about a discussion at an electronic conference, the information including utterance objects, each containing data, and a procedure for the data, and reply link information to another utterance object;

calculating one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of the utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as indexing an amount of the information about the discussion; and

judging to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value.

13. (currently amended) A process apparatus, comprising:

storage means for storing information about a discussion at an electronic conference, the information including respective utterance objects of respective speakers in the discussion, each of the utterance objects including data, and a procedure for the data and reply link information to another utterance object; and

judgment means for calculating one of a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion as indexing an amount of the information stored about the discussion and for judging to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value.